

Respiratory Disease Status at Indian Lakes Holding Facility

June 11, 2010

Currently there is a minimal amount of viral respiratory disease at the Indian Lakes Wild Horse holding facility in Fallon, NV. It is located in the oldest of the 2010 born colts (Feb. & March). This is part of the normal pattern where newborn colts lose their disease immunity they receive from their mothers via colostrum and actively build their own immunity to common disease organisms. This process typically takes two – four months. During this time colts will be vaccinated to stimulate immunity to common equine disease and be naturally exposed to common equine pathogens. Typically, maternal immunity wanes at three – four months of age. This will be an ongoing process until fall as the colts continue to grow.

Influenza, Rhinopneumonitis and other equine pathogens are endemic to horse populations, both on the range and in confinement. Incidence and rate of spread are typically higher in confinement due to concentrated conditions. Overall, this is analogous to young children going to school or daycare for the first time.

There is no specific treatment for viral respiratory disease other than rest. Antibiotics can be administered to prevent or treat secondary bacterial infections as needed. Typically, this involves dosing individual animals with injectable penicillin or dosing all animals in the pen with an antibiotic added to the drinking water.

Currently, these pens of colts are being monitored and those that appear sick are being treated. Two colts were treated during the first week in June. One colt later died. Pneumonia was noted on the necropsy. The other colt is doing well. There are currently 10 colts in the pens with nasal discharge. They will be monitored and treated with antibiotics if they have signs of secondary bacterial infection.

Many adult horses at the facility exhibited the same clinical signs (cough and nasal discharge) during and after capture. They have all recovered and are doing well. There have been no adult deaths attributable to viral respiratory disease. There is

no evidence of strangles (more serious equine respiratory disease) in the Calico horses. Although historically, it has been present in this herd.

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